SCRIPTS BITS! – SPECIAL EDITION
The Road to Year One – Part Two

It was March of 2006 when *Sonic the Hedgehog #160* hit the shelves. Its lead story, "Birthday Bash!," was my debut on the Sonic scene as the new lead writer. It was a very exciting time for me and for a number of Sonic readers who'd known me for my works in the fandom. What most didn't know at that point was I'd been among the staff for five months already. Four years before *that* I was still applying to become a writer for the title.

The first application was an abysmal failure for many good reasons. The scripts were unpolished, there was no letters of intent or recommendation, and I didn't provide the pivotal self-addressed and stamped envelope. Newbie mistakes and I learned from them. The scripts were revised and new applications were made and sent. It wasn't until October of 2005 that editor Mike Pellerito took a chance with a college undergraduate and showed him the ropes. What was it in that final application package that caught his eye?

Now you get to find out.

It's February 2007 and we're fast approaching my thirteenth consecutive issue on *Sonic the Hedgehog* – my first full year on the comic. To commemorate coming full circle I'll be doing three sets of special Script Bits! You'll be able to see what got me in the door and, in comparison to the other Script Bits!, see just how far I came since I joined the team in 2005.

The added bonus is that you will be able to see **the entire scripts.** These scripts will never be published and all of the plot points in them have been rendered moot or have already evolved into stories you've seen. As with all Script Bits!, I'll go into some detail and try to provide some insight into the scripts. This month's edition will feature the two six-page back-ups I submitted in the final application package. You'll find the material on the following pages:

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Remembering "Zoning Out"

Long-time readers will remember the Knuckles-centric story of Super Special #14 and how the Dark Legion took control of Angel Island by sending almost everyone to the Twilight Zone. This was a delightful bit of poetic justice since this was the same Zone that the Legion had been trapped in for generations.

Their timing couldn't have been worse, however, as a number of fascinating plot points arose only to have been solved "off-stage." "Zoning Out" was to be a series of short stories that investigated the events that occurred in the Twilight Zone before everyone was returned to the Prime Zone.

A part of me still wishes we could run this story since it helps to underscore the current strife on Angel Island. The Dingoes, in a way, have every right to be angry with the Echidnas. This doesn't excuse the brutality of Kage, but it does give another layer, some additional resonance if you will, to the occupation of the Dingo Regime.

Looking back I don't see anything glaring that would need to be updated outside of the series of stories being far, far too long. Spend half a year's worth of back-ups telling tales that ultimately did not progress the overall plot? Folly! This story might have been fine in the time-frame it was written in as a stand-alone, but anything more would've been beating a dead horse.

You may also notice Locke is written far more level-headed here than he appears in my current work. This was from a different time when Echidnaopolis was still standing proud, the Brotherhood stood united and strong, and nobody had heard of the Xorda. Time has not been kind to Locke.

And, sadly, I don't recall what the follow-up story featuring the Chaotix would've entailed. Sorry Chaotix fans!

As in the previous edition of the "Year One" series I've only altered the script so that the spacing isn't a nightmare. The rest of the foibles of the past remain intact.

Title: Zoning Out, Part One of Five
Pages: 6

Page 1

The city streets of Echidnaopolis. There is a mob of Dingoes, armed with laser rifiles. They are lead by General von Stryker, who wears his Energy Guantlet. Facing them is a large group of E.S.T. Echidna troops in riot gear, also holding blaster rifiles. They are lead by Constable Remmington, who wears identicle riot gear. There are hover cars parked and odd angles in the street and civilian echdinas either hanging out of the windows or getting out of their vehicles. Everyone is gawking towards the sky, which appears to be a nightmare version of the evening sky with large globular objects floating overhead.

[Panel 1]

The above scene, taking just over 2/3rds of the page.

[Panel 2]

Close-up of Stryker's glaring, snarling face.

Stryker: WHAT KIND OF ECHIDNA TRICK IS THIS?!

[Panel 3]

Close-up of Remmington's steely gaze.

Remmington: IT'S NO TRICK OF MY PEOPLE!

Page 2

[Panel 1]

Stryker raises his fist to the sky, his Energy Gauntlet making a trail as he punches at the sky. The Dingoes behind him cheer/snarl in response.

Stryker: NO MORE LIES, ECHIDNA! MY PEOPLE CLAIM THEIR BIRTH-RIGHT **NOW!**

[Panel 2]

Remmington looks hesitant as the E.S.T. echidnas behind him raise their blasters.

Remmington: [thinking] IF IT COMES TO BLOWS, THIS IS GOING TO TURN INTO A BLOOD-BATH!
Remmington (says): GENERAL! LISTEN TO REASON...!

[Panel 3]

Stryker points at Remmington, his Energy Gauntlet again making a trail.

Stryker: **NO!** YOUR HIGH COUNCIL HAS BEEN TALKING FOR MONTHS WHILE MY PEOPLE SHIVER AND STARVE!

[Panel 4]

Front view of Stryker. He points towards the reader. We see the Dingoes preparing to fire.

Stryker: WE DEMAND RETRIBUTION - **NOW!**

[Panel 5]

The two armed groups aim at each other in a wide shot. Overlapping them are two smaller panels. In the one over the Dingoes' side of the panel, we see Stryker's cruel, confident eyes, and some of his smirk. In the one over the E.S.T. soldiers, we see Remmington's firm gaze as sweat rolls down his temples.

Page 3

[Panel 1]

Locke and Archimedes (on Locke's shoulder) teleport in between Remmington and Stryker. The point of view is roughly behind Stryker. There is a fading flash beneath and behind Locke as smoke peals away. Locke holds out his hands to the armies.

Sound FX: BAMF!

[Panel 2]

Locke looks gravely at Remmington, who seems to take a step back.

Locke: THE FIRST ECHIDNA TO OPEN FIRE WILL HAVE TO ANSWER TO ME.

Remmington: Y-YES SIR!

[Panel 3]

Locke turns to Stryker as Remmington extends and arm and calls to his troops.

Remmington: HOLD YOUR FIRE!

Stryker: MORE TRICKS, GUARDIAN?

Locke: NO TRICKS, VON STRYKER.

[Panel 4]

Locke firmly/calmly converses with Stryker, who snarls with every word. The Dingoes behind him look anxious, and few look confused.

Locke: TELL YOUR MEN TO STAND DOWN.

Stryker: AND WHY SHOULD I DO THAT?

Locke: BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT YOUR GREATEST CONCERN RIGHT NOW.

Page 4

[Panel 1]

Stryker crosses his arms and glares down at Locke as Remmington joins Locke's side.

Stryker: OH?

Locke: WHILE WE WERE ALL DISTRACTED BY OTHER BUSINESS, THE **DARK LEGION** USED SOME SORT OF WEAPON TO SEND US ALL INTO A ZONE VERY MUCH LIKE THE ONE THEY WERE EXILED TO - UNTIL RECENTLY.

[Panel 2]

Stryker makes a vehement gesture to his troops and snarls down at Locke.

Stryker: THAT CHANGES NOTHING!

Locke: OH, BUT IT DOES...

[Panel 3]

Close-up on Locke's shoulder. We get the upper-right fourth of his face. Archimedes steps out onto the Echidna's shoulder.

Archimedes: WHAT GOOD IS TAKING OVER THE CITY IF YOU'RE BANISHED TO THIS PLACE?

[Panel 4] Stryker points at the ant.

Stryker: WHAT OTHER ALTERNATIVE IS THERE, TINY?

Archimedes: RATHER THAN ADD TO THE CHAOS, TRY TO PREVENT IT!

[Panel 5] Remmington takes a step in front of Locke, whose eyes never leave Stryker.

Remmington: LOOK AT THE SKY, GENERAL! EVERYONE IS GOING TO PANIC ONCE THEY SEE THEY'VE BEEN MOVED TO ANOTHER ZONE. PLEASE - HELP US CONTAIN THE PANIC!

[Panel 6] Stryker folds his arms as the Dingo forces smile darkly.

Stryker: WHAT'S IN IT FOR US?
Page 5

[Panel 1]

Locke steps in front of Remmington again as the latter loses his temper.

Remmington: OF ALL THE SELFISH...!

Locke: WHAT DO YOU WANT?

[Panel 2]

Stryker loses any villain's edge here as he looks seriously down at Locke.

Stryker: MY PEOPLE LIVE IN MISERY. I WANT THE HIGH COUNCIL TO MAKE GOOD ON THEIR PROMISE TO GIVE US SHELTER.

[Panel 3]

Locke returns the gaze.

Locke: I WILL PERSONALLY SEE TO IT THAT THE LEGISLATION MOVES ALONG FASTER.

[Panel 4]

Stryker gives Locke and ugly smirk. Locke grows darkly serious.

Stryker: YOU EXPECT ME TO TRUST THE WORD OF AN ECHIDNA?

Locke: NO, GENERAL, THE WORD OF A GUARDIAN.

[Panel 5]

This panel is divided diagonally. In the top half, Stryker frowns in consideration, judging Locke harshly with his eyes. In the bottom half, Locke peers back steadily.

[Panel 6]

Stryker extends an arm to his troops, dropping his head slightly. The Dingoes behind him look shocked and surprised.

Stryker: VERY WELL - MEN, STAND DOWN!
Page 6

[Panel 1]

Locke smiles thankfully up to Stryker. Stryker looks mildly disgusted.

Locke: THANK YOU, GENERAL VON STRYKER.

Stryker: WHATEVER, GUARDIAN.

[Panel 2]

Locke turns to Remington, all business again. Remington has taken off his helmet and holds it under one arm.

Locke: CONSTABLE Remington, I WANT YOU TO WORK DIRECTLY WITH THE GENERAL TO CONTAIN THE PANICKED PUBLIC.

Remington: YES SIR, GUARDIAN LOCKE.

[Panel 3] Remington turn to his troops and delivers his orders. Stryker's back is to the reader as he does the same.

Remington: ALRIGHT MEN - HOLSTER YOUR WEAPONS AND TEMPERS! WE HAVE WORK TO DO!

Stryker: SWALLOW YOUR PRIDE ONE MORE TIME, MEN...

[Panel 4] The Dingoes and E.S.T. soldiers start mingling and milling about in the background. Locke watches, his back to the reader and his hands on his hips. Archimedes stands on his shoulder.

Archimedes: WELL, THAT'S ONE CRISIS ADVERTED!

Locke: INDEED, OLD FRIEND...

[Panel 5] Close-up on Locke's grim/concerned face. Archimedes crosses his upper arms and rests the other two on his hips as he looks to the echidna.

Locke: ...LET'S HOPE THE REST OF THE FLOATING ISLAND CAN COPE JUST AS WELL!

Dialogue Box: NEXT - THE CHAOTIX!

Remembering "Assault!"

In case it hadn't become readily apparent, my favorite team is Knuckles and the Chaotix. I love the Freedom Fighters and enjoy them, but they've never held my attention as a fan quite like the Chaotix did and continue to do. "Assault!" was to be an Angel Island adventure that set up an on-going subplot.

By this point in the true continuity, Dr. Eggman was still a robot with his "evil Midas touch." Snively was roboticized but in control of his own will. The idea of this story was Snively's assault would ultimately fail and his ship would crash on Angel Island. From there he would set up a base from within the wreckage and try to conquer Angel Island for Dr. Eggman – and himself.

I think this works as a nice set-up story still, but I cringe at the dialogue. Snively has a few good lines, but oi, it's painfully heavy-handed. The plot itself with Snively setting up shop on Angel Island works but it's the classic Robotropolis/Knothole arrangement with a new coat of paint. The dynamics would play out differently since Snively is no Eggman and the Chaotix aren't anything like the Freedom Fighters, but it would've been more of the same. I am, however, sorely tempted to reuse the BlitzkrEgg purely for the name.

Title: "Assault!"
Pages: Six (6)

Page One

[Panel 1]

This panel dominates the page. Dr. Robotnik and Snively stand before a giant bay window, looking into a monstrous hangar. In it is a large, menacing flying gunship. Dr. Robotnik is vehement while Snively is more reserved.

Dialogue Box : OLD MEGAOPOLIS

Robotnik: BEHOLD, SNIVELY! MY BLITZKR-EGG! A FLYING FORTRESS OF IMMEASURABLE POWER.

Snively: QUITE IMPRESSIVE, SIR.

Robotnik: WITH IT, I WILL FINALLY BE ABLE TO CONQUER THE FLOATING ISLAND AND ESTABLISH IT AS MY TACTICAL "HOME-AWAY-FROM-HOME!"

Snively: ENJOY YOUR FLIGHT, SIR.

[Panel 2]

Robotnik points to Snively, the latter recoiling in surprise.

Robotnik: YOU MEAN **YOUR** FLIGHT, SNIVELY!

Snively: M-MY FLIGHT?!

[Panel 3]

Close-up on Robotnik, his face contorted in villainous glee.

Robotnik: YES, SNIVELY. AND DO KEEP IN MIND THAT IS YOU START ANY OF YOUR OLD TRICKS, I **WILL** DEACTIVATE YOU FROM AFAR.

Page Two

[Panel 1]

A distant shot, allowing us to see the entire BlitzkrEgg launching from the city.

Dialogue Box : “AREN’T YOU HAPPY YOU VOLUNTEERED TO BE ROBOTICIZED?”

[Panel 2]

Snively sits atop a throne in the control room, obviously displeased. A number of Egg-Robos are at the various helm stations, mindlessly piloting the craft.

Snively: [thinking] CURSE YOU, ROBOTNIK! I THOUGHT I WOULD GAIN FROM SUBMITTING TO YOUR ROBOTICIZING TOUCH, BUT NOW I SEE IT WAS ALL A TRICK!

[Panel 3]

Close-up profile of Snively as he broods.

Snively: [thinking] FOR SO LONG I’VE WANTED TO BE OUT FROM UNDER YOUR THUMB, ONLY NOW I FIND MYSELF WHOLLY IN YOUR PALM!

[Panel 4]

Snively seems reluctantly resigned to his fate.

Snively: [thinking] NEVER-THE-LESS, THE FLOATING ISLAND WILL SERVE ME WELL ONCE I FIGURE OUT A WAY TO TURN THE TABLES ON YOU, DEAR UNCLE JULIAN...

Page 3

[Panel 1]

The Floating Island. We see Knuckles standing at its edge, staring quietly at the ocean below.

Dialogue Box : THE FLOATING ISLAND'S EDGE

Knuckles: [thinking] SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST YEAR...IT'S HARD TO KEEP UP. IT'S HARD TO FIND TIME TO MYSELF ANYMORE.

[Panel 2]

A shot from behind Knuckles, looking out over the ocean. The scene is tranquil - calming. Off to one side, distantly, we can see the shape of the approaching BlitzkrEgg.

Knuckles: [thinking] I HAVE A GIRLFRIEND NOW, AND A WHOLE FAMILY. I'VE BECOME MORE POWERFUL THAN I COULD EVER IMAGINE, AND I'M STILL LEARNING HOW TO CONTROL THINGS. AND THEN THERE'S ALL THE POLITICS...!

[Panel 3]

Knuckles reluctantly turns from the edge of the island, his eyes still lingering on the waters below.

Knuckles: [thinking] I GUESS DEALING WITH ALL OF IT IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GUARDIAN. I GUESS I CAN HANDLE IT, AS LONG AS I HAVE MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS - AND BARRING ANY FURTHER...

[Panel 4]

Knuckles looks up, suddenly surprised as the shadow of the BlitzkrEgg begins to creep over him. His text shrinks to indicate his surprise.

Knuckles: ...ATTACKS?!

[Panel 5]

A worm's eye view with Knuckles as he watches the massive BlitzkrEgg fly overhead.

Knuckles: THAT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANYTHING THE DARK LEGION WOULD DESIGN...IT MUST BE FROM **DR. ROBOTNIK!**

Page 4

[Panel 1]

Knuckles dashes into the jungle grimly - nervously. The jungle trees sway violently under the rush of the flying fortress.

Knuckles: [thinking] WHY IS ROBOTNIK ATTACKING NOW? I HAVE ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT RIGHT NOW! WHY CAN'T HE GO BOTHER SONIC, OR SOMETHING?

[Panel 2]

Knuckles leaps between two trees, gaining height.

[Panel 3]

Knuckles breaks through the canopy, dreadlocks fanning out, as he glides after the BlitzkrEgg. We see Echidnaopolis in the distance, the BlitzkrEgg heading straight for it.

Knuckles: NO! WHY HIS HE ATTACKING THE CITY? HE'S BEEN HERE ENOUGH TO KNOW THE MASTER EMERALD ISN'T THERE!

[Panel 4]

Close-up on Knuckles as he glides, scowling darkly.

Knuckles: WHAT IF HE ISN'T IN IT FOR THE EMERALD THIS TIME? WHAT IF HE'S TRYING TO TAKE THE WHOLE ISLAND FOR IS OWN?

[Panel 5]

A distant shot as we see both Knuckles and the BlitzkrEgg zoom towards the city.

Knuckles: I CAN'T LET THAT HAPPEN!

Page 5

[Panel 1]

Echidnaopolis. The Chaotix (Vector, Mighty, Julie-Su and Espio) are gathered on the sidewalk, gawking at the attacking BlitzkrEgg. Laser-bolts rain down from above and into builds, shattering them. Echidnas and Dingos run around in the streets, panicking.

Dialogue Box : Echidnaopolis

Vector: WHAT'S THE DEAL? I THOUGHT YOUR PEOPLE WERE ALL BUDDY-BUDDY WITH US NOW!

Julie-Su: THE DARK LEGION AREN'T ME PEOPLE ANYMORE, LEATHER-HEAD! AND THIS ISN'T THEIR STYLE!

[Panel 2]

Knuckles comes to land with the others, all of them thankful to see him. The chaos continues around them.

Espio: KNUCKLES!

Mighty: JUST THE MAN FOR THE HOUR!

Vector: WHAT'S THE PLAN, BRO?

[Panel 3]

Close-up on Knuckles, the backs of the others' heads framing him.

Knuckles: IT LOOKS LIKE ROBOTNIK'S BACK, AND WITH A VENGENCE! WE NEED TO GET TO THAT FLYING FORTRESS AND TAKE IT OUT OF COMMISSION - PRONTO!

[Panel 4]

Espio hooks a thumb at the building closest to them. Knuckles smiles in agreement.

Espio: HE'S FLYING PRETTY LOW TO ENSURE ACCURACY. IF WE CAN MAKE IT TO THE ROOF-TOPS, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET TO IT.

Knuckles: GOOD PLAN. I'LL CARRY JULIE-SU, AND YOU TAKE MIGHTY.

Page 6

[Panel 1]

Vector looks highly disappointed. Behind him, Mighty grins and stretches his arms while cracking his knuckles.

Vector: WAIT! WHAT ABOUT ME? DON'T THINK I'M GONNA JUST CHILL ON THE SIDE-LINES!

Mighty: NO WORRIES, VEC. I'LL GIVE YOU A BOOST!

[Panel 2]

A vertical panel. Vector shoots up along the building, screaming. Below, we see Mighty finishing the throw.

Vector: AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!

[Panel 3]

Julie-Su wraps her arms around Knuckles shoulders. Mighty does the same to Espio. Knuckles and Espio start climbing up the side of the building.

Knuckles: ALRIGHT GUYS, LET'S GO!

[Panel 4]

The BlitzkrEgg's control room. Snively looks up in curiosity as a large screen flickers on. On the screen, we see the building in question. Vector is getting to his feet on the roof while the others have climbed half-way up.

Dialogue Box: MEANWHILE...

Snively: WHAT'S THIS? THE CHAOTIX! I SHOULD'VE GUESSED THEY'D COME TO THE RESCUE. NO MATTER - EGG-BOTS! LOCK ALL CANNONS ON THAT BUILDING!

[Panel 5]

Close-up on Snively's face. He smiles wickedly.

Snively: FIRE AT WILL!

Dialogue Box: TO BE CONTINUED...!